

PLANE CRASH KILLS 32 NEAR COALINGA

Craft Taking Farm Workers to Be Deported

FRESNO, Jan. 28. (AP)—A chartered Immigration Service plane crashed and burned in Western Fresno County today, killing 28 Mexican deportees, the crew of three and an immigration guard. The airliner exploded over Los Gatos Canyon, near Coalinga.

W. L. Childers, a rancher, said the plane was at an altitude of about 5000 feet when he noticed smoke trailing from the left engine of the two-engine plane. Then the left wing fell off and the fuselage plummeted, nose first.

Some Jump or Fall

As it fell, Childers said, several persons either jumped or fell to their deaths. Some of the bodies were found at distances ranging up to a quarter mile from the plane.

Irving F. Wixon, director of the U.S. Immigration Service at San Francisco, said the Mexican nationals were being flown to the deportation center at El Centro, Cal., for return to Mexico.

Wixon said the group included Mexican nationals who had entered the United States illegally, and others who had stayed beyond duration of work contracts in California. All were agricultural workers, he said.

The crew was identified as Frank Atkinson, 30, Long Beach, the pilot; Mrs. Bobbie Atkinson, 28, his wife, stewardess, and Marion Ewing, 32, Balboa, co-pilot.

Atkinson was said to have lived formerly in Rochester, N.Y., and had logged more than 1700 hours as a member of the Air Transport Command during the war.

Guard From Berkeley

The Immigration Service identified the guard as Frank E. Chaffin of Berkeley.

The plane had been chartered from Airline Transport Carriers, a charter line with headquarters in Burbank.

Frank V. Johnson, foreman of a road work camp, said the plane "appeared to explode and a wing fell off" before it dived to the ground just off the road where the work crew was engaged.

The wreckage was enveloped in roaring flames when the fuel tanks ignited. Not until the fire had died down were rescuers able to get at the plane's occupants.

The scene of the crash is in the mountains about 20 miles west of Coalinga, 75 miles from here in the rough coastal area known as the Diablo section.

Pilot and Stewardess Lived in Long Beach

Frank Atkinson, 30-year-old captain of the Airline Transport Carriers DC-3 that crashed yesterday near Coalinga, lived with his wife Bobbie, 28 — stewardess on the ship—at 1242 Raymond Ave., Long Beach.

He had logged 2556 flying hours, including 1800 hours in

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PILOT — Frank Atkinson was killed in chartered plane crash near Coalinga.



STEWARDESS — Mrs. Bobbie Atkinson was one of victims of Fresno County crash.

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DC-3's, and had been flying for the Burbank (Lockheed Air Terminal) company for six months, officials of the line said. Atkinson, a native of Rochester, N.Y., had served with the Army's Air Transport Command during the war.

His wife had been employed as a stewardess for three months. They had no children.

Marion Ewing, 32, of 614½ W. Central Ave., Balboa, was co-pilot of the ill-fated ship. A veteran of 4000 air hours and 76 missions over the Hump for A.T.C., he had been with the company for three months.

He operated delicatessens in Balboa and Costa Mesa, friends said. His widow Dorothy and son Ross, 3, live at the Balboa address.